

5

GRADE ONE

INTRODUCTION OF THEMES
Theme: History and Relationship with Other Churches

Lesson 1

OUR CHURCH:
THE MAR THOMA CHURCH

Aim:

To help the students to become familiar with our church, its name and the founder.

Bible Verse: Mark 16: 15

“Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.”

Main Ideas:

The name of our church is Malankara (Malabar) Mar Thoma Syrian Church or The Mar Thoma Church. There are many other churches everywhere. They all belong to the body of Christ who is the head of the Church. St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus was the founder of our church. He traveled to Kerala state, India and started to preach the gospel long time ago.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

Teacher distributes a sheet of paper with the name of the Mar Thoma Church and the picture of St. Thomas. A picture of the board in front of the church with the name and other information may be used as a visual aid for discussion. Pictures or images of St. Thomas may be used as the teacher explains Apostle Thomas as the founder of our church in Kerala, India. The name of our church, the Mar Thoma Church, means the Church of Saint (Mar) Thomas (Thoma). It is strongly believed that the Apostle built seven churches in Kerala and established a Christian community known as the Malankara Church.

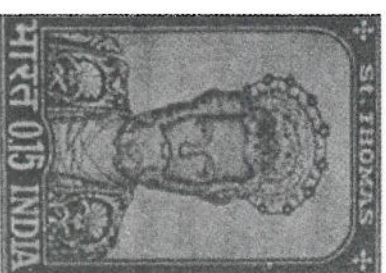
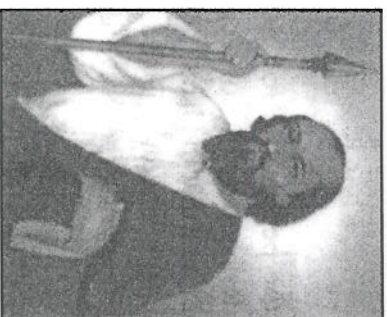
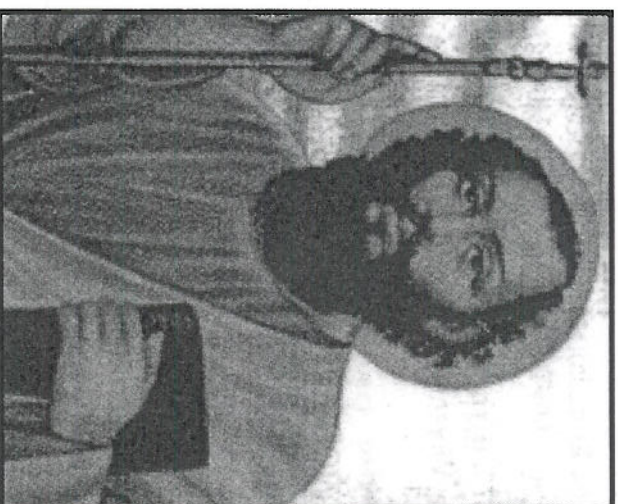
Materials:

Picture of St. Thomas, the Apostle (Page 63). Teacher brings a picture of your church or any other church.

Conclusion:

The name of our church explains that it was founded by St. Thomas. As such it is a first century church.

APOSTLE THOMAS, CARRYING THE BIBLE AND THE CROSS TO INDIA



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Theme: Worship: Faith and Practices of the Church

Lesson 2

WORSHIP, CHURCH BUILDING AND ITS USE FOR WORSHIP

Aim:

To become familiar with the church building and its use for worship in specific ways.

Bible Verse: Psalm 150: 1

Praise the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in his mighty heavens.

Main Ideas:

The church is a place where the people of God gather together to worship God. It is the designated area consecrated only for praising God. Scripture teaches us that the Israel people experienced the presence of God in the sanctuary. Hence, we gather together in the church to experience the presence of God.

The inside space of a church building, known as sanctuary, is divided into Chancel (Madbaha) and Nave (Haikala). The Achen (priest) celebrates Holy Communion in the Chancel which we keep as holy and people stand (or sit) in the Nave.

Together these areas are called sanctuary where we worship God. The Church is a special place of worship where we recognize the presence of God.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

Students mark the two main areas (chancel and nave) of the sanctuary with the help of teachers (Page 66). They learn these terms and recognize the sanctity of this place. The teacher encourages the children to keep the sanctuary clean and beautiful.

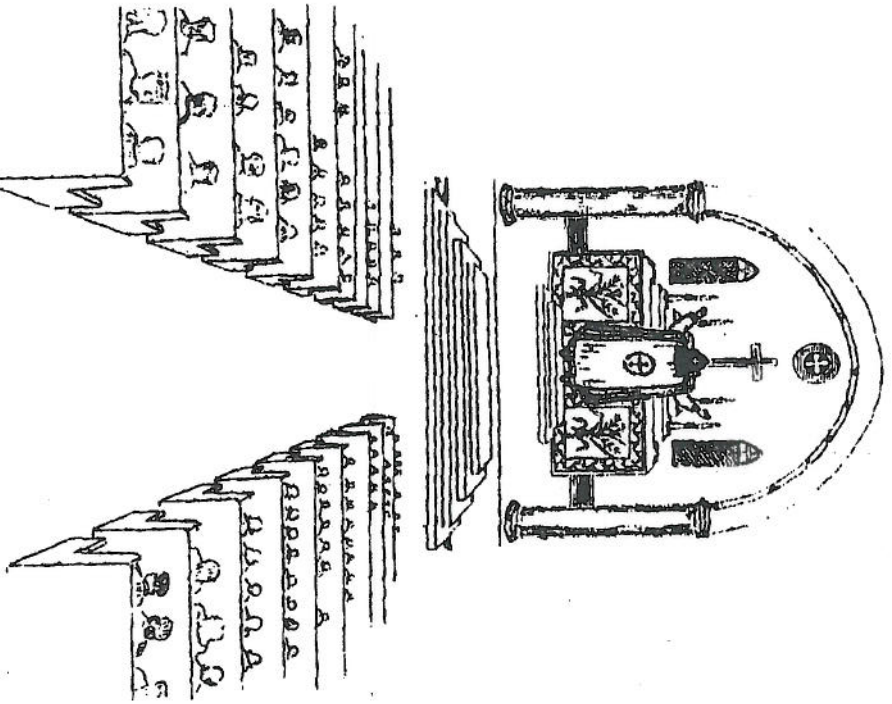
Materials:

Picture of a Sanctuary (inside of the church) with two areas Chancel and Nave.

Conclusion:

A church building is a special place which has a unique style. It is for people to gather and worship. We must keep the sanctuary clean and beautiful because it is considered holy.

Picture of a Sanctuary



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Theme: Christian Sacraments

Lesson 3

HOLY COMMUNION

Aim:

To become well informed about Holy Communion, one of the Dominical Sacraments practiced in the Mar Thoma Church.

Bible Verse: Luke 22:19

And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me".

Main Ideas:

We observe seven sacraments in our church. Of them, those sacraments commanded by the Lord are called the Dominical Sacraments. They are Holy Baptism and Holy Communion. Last year we learnt about Baptism. As you know, we receive blessings from God through practices like this. Holy Communion is such a sacrament. Holy Communion means an "offering". Jesus took bread and wine in his hands, blessed them and gave them to his disciples. He commanded them to follow this practice in remembrance of him. So the Church observes

this event as a sacrament. We use bread and wine representing the body and blood of Jesus. While receiving the bread and wine, we remember Jesus' sacrificial giving of his body and shedding of his blood for the sake of believers. The participants receive special blessing to follow Jesus' sacrificial love. As the children attend the service, they should keep quiet and pray to receive God's blessings. They should not disturb their parents, as they have to concentrate on chanting the written prayers in the liturgy book.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

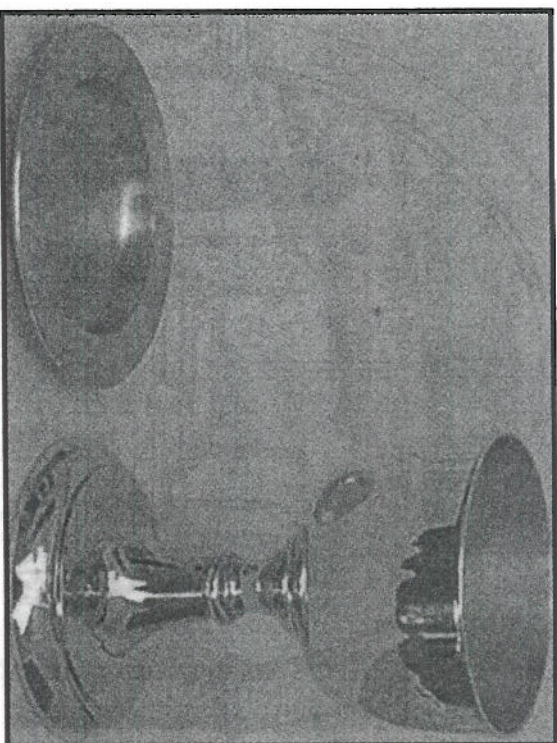
Ask specific questions on bread (in paten) and wine (in chalice): *Where are they kept? How are they distributed? How do people receive Holy Communion in our church?*

Materials:

See the picture on of the paten and the chalice.

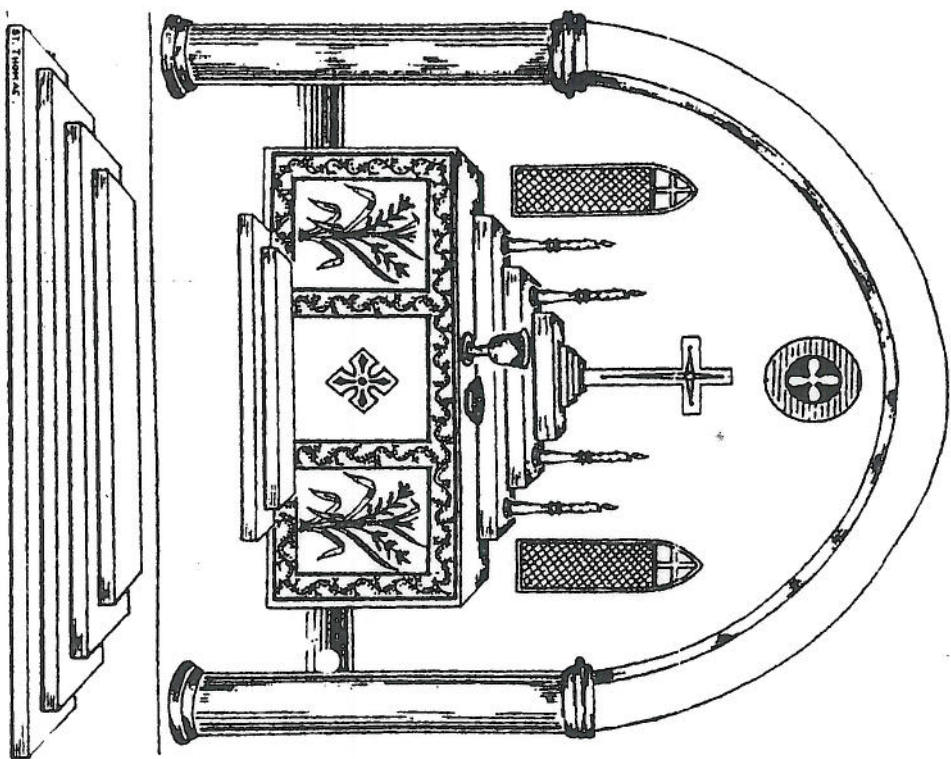
Conclusion:

Sacrament is a means of receiving God's grace. Sacrament is a visible sign that demands our sincere participation. Holy Communion is such an occasion to get God's grace.



PICTURE OF PATEN AND CHALICE

Altar



See the Cross, candles, paten and chalice on the altar

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Theme: Uniqueness and Central Values

Lesson 4

MAR THOMA CHURCH'S EMPHASIS ON THE BIBLE

Aim:

To familiarize the students with the Bible and its importance in the Mar Thoma Church.

Bible Verse: Psalm 119:105.

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

Main Ideas:

We bring the Bible to the Church and Sunday School. The lessons we learn in Sunday School are based on the Bible. The Bible helps us to learn more about God known through Jesus. The Bible is the Word of God. We read it every day and understand what God wants us to do.

Teaching Strategies & Activities:

In many Sunday Schools, children receive a copy of the Bible while entering Grade 1. Children are encouraged to bring their own Bible, to the class. This helps to become more familiar with it. Children are encouraged to take care of their Bible and other books. The teacher explains the Sunday School lessons

showing its relation to the Bible. Daily use of the Bible as part of personal and family prayer is encouraged by the teachers. Singing: "B-I-B-L-E, *it's the book for me...*"

Materials:

Bible, student book with Bible verse

Conclusion:

Our church is unique in the use of the Bible. Members are encouraged to use it even from early years, while in Sunday School.

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Theme: Mission and Ministry of the Church

Lesson 5

CHURCH AS LIGHT TO THE WORLD

Aim:

To explain the motto "Lighted to Lighten" on the Logo.

Bible Verse: Isaiah 60:1

"Arise, shine, for your light has come".

Main Ideas:

Light is an important symbol in all religions just as darkness is. Usually light means all that is good; while darkness can mean evil. For us Christians, light has an extra special meaning, which is why we use it during our worship service and on our church logo. Above the picture of the "Lamp of Knowledge", our motto repeats the importance of light "Lighted to Lighten." This really reflects our responsibility as Christians who are already saved. We should help to save others.

In the Bible, God created light on the very first day. This is how important light is. Jesus called himself the "Light of the world". People are walking in the light when they trust in Jesus. Jesus wants His followers to be the "light" of the world.

God overcomes the evil forces in this world just as light removes darkness. As good Christians, we have to be examples of this light. We are lighted through Jesus Christ, and can show this light to others. By bringing others to Christ, we are helping them also to walk in the light and become His followers.

Teaching Strategies and Activities:

1. Discuss with the class at the end of the lesson; how we can _____ be an example of light (all three).
 - a. as individuals
 - b. as a community
 - c. as a country
2. Have the children either use glitter or sand to decorate the flame portion of a picture of a burning candle.
3. Sing the Song, "This Little Light of Mine".

Conclusion:

God wants us to be light of our world by removing the darkness, the bad things or evil forces.